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belief in the devil and in eternal punishment.^s The doctrine of election in its crude form would accentuate the tendency to cruelty in Calvinism. It is often overlooked that Christianity in the form in which it was once presented by the orthodox, was a religion of cruelty no less than a religion of love, perhaps more so. All or most of the above doctrines we can now reject and yet retain much that is of universal value.

Most valuable, perhaps, is the principle of the spiritual liberty of the individual. Calvinism also comprehends much that is best in Stoicism. It presents a Spartan ideal of life, views life as a rigid discipline or an active campaign. Stripped of theological language, its ethic is in many respects the ethic which the practical man, the man of action, consciously or unconsciously, holds. Liberally interpreted, and tempered with elements from more humane and genial creeds, Calvinism is still a religion for Scotsmen.

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THE PRESENT ALTITUDE.

F. CARREL.

TO what moral and social state have we attained in Europe at the present time? Two answers may be given to this question. It may be affirmed that we have advanced to a high civilization, to a degree of moral and social excellence such as the world has never known, but it may also be asserted that the advance has been largely neutralized by regressive forces and that we have made but little progress.

The first contention is supported by a certain set of

^s A certain natural sanity and common-sense has preserved Calvinists in Scotland, at all events in more recent times, from accepting these doctrines too literally, and from pursuing them to their logical consequences.

facts. The second is based upon another series. If we could establish separate numerical values for these facts, we might be able to ascertain if and to what extent the progressive forces exceeded the regressive or *vice versa*. We might, for instance, construct graduated scales on which we should be able to read off the respective heights of good and evil reached in the course of history. But the coefficients for the different elements of good and evil would be of doubtful accuracy. It would be necessary that the valuations to establish them should all be made on the same basis, that is to say, on the same interpretation of right and wrong, and that the meaning of these terms should be settled in advance. If by an average of moralists' judgments, good were defined as the general welfare of the race and evil whatever could be ascertained, by the tests at present at our disposal, to be opposed to it, we might arrive at some results which would not be without interest, but the value of our computation would be impaired by the fact that it would be difficult to decide in which scale many social phenomena should be placed, since out of apparent racial evil may come demonstrable racial good, the converse being also true. A civil war would at first sight have to be placed in the scale of evil, but if it put an end to internal miseries and gave a new life to a nation, it would not be easy to exclude it from the scale of good.

To minimize the risk of error, it would be necessary in constructing the scales, to judge after the knowledge of results, and either to exclude present history which could not be so judged, or to include it by estimating its developments. Both methods would be incomplete. The worth of the system would depend, in a last analysis, upon whether a great well-being of the race is the highest good, or whether such well-being does not contain some elements of disintegration that might, in some contingencies, endanger its existence.

Thus there is much uncertainty; and it is clear that if we are uncertain as to the value of our scales, we are

hardly in a position to measure by their means. Therefore we must adopt some other method of research, abandoning the hope of finding coefficients. Now the best system of inquiry would seem to be to take the present age as it appears and to consider separately and qualitatively the good influences and the bad, defining good as that effect of social dynamics which in our times and to our own powers of perception is favorable to the physical, mental, and material progress of the race and to the advance of the highest form of civilization which we can conceive; while defining evil as that effect of the same dynamics which is opposed to that progress and civilization. The definition of good is doubtless open to objection, but we must obtain a working definition, and this one is probably as near an approximation to the truth as we can reach at present.

Recalling now the question with which we started, To what moral and social state have we attained? we may consider the times, first from the good, then from the bad standpoint.

We have to-day a society in which the rich and powerful no longer resort to crimes of violence, but make increasing efforts to alleviate poverty and to cure the sick, a society which has abolished slavery and which shows a certain tendency to abolish war. Among the good traits in the sense here accepted may also be included the desire to save life either by careful child-rearing, by hygiene or by other means. There is anxiety to prevent waste of life by suicide and generally to strive toward the attainment of the highest degree of human efficiency. In addition to this there is an immense endeavor to wrest from nature secrets, the possession of which increases the capabilities of human life. Education from unmoral tends to become moral in the secular sense, and there is a prospect of a generation growing up with a specific moral education. The reduction of alcoholic intemperance, especially among the higher classes, is excellent. The incorruptibility of justice in most European countries and

the efficiency of the police are beneficial factors. There is great security for life and property. Opportunities for the better enjoyment of air and space are provided for the poorer inhabitants of towns. Preventive medicine, prudential diet, and in some countries a desire to maintain population within the limits of available natural resources, are removing much disease and want. We have arrived at a stage when we may venture to hope that the foundations have been laid of a far more satisfactory human state than any that the world has known.

Now let us consider the opposite tendencies to those above enumerated, endeavoring to avoid, as far as possible, the personal equation which is often a potent factor in the estimation of good and evil. The bad characteristics, it must be said at once, are somewhat less easily discernible than the good in our present-day society. A careful scrutiny, however, reveals the following facts. There exists to-day a competition for the necessities and above all for the amenities of life which is so engrossing that the lives of individuals are almost exclusively devoted to it. The desire to possess in order to enjoy is intense, and to gratify it deceit, prevarication, false pretention, hard bargaining are frequently resorted to. Men tend to become valued by each other, not primarily for the qualities, moral and intellectual, which they possess, but for their material means. Where pleasure is the great desideratum, as it is in our society, those who can offer it to others are prized, the more so as pleasure tends to become costly. The exaltation of success in enterprise is carried to lengths which can only be described as unreasonable. Along with this excessive adulation of success there goes a corresponding disregard for the means by which it is achieved, and little or no recognition of the fact that success is very frequently not the result of personal effort alone, but largely of the efforts of the community and of the hazard of events.

Insucccess, on the other hand, which is often due to cir-

cumstances over which the individual has no control, is punished by contempt, because the solidarity of the race and its responsibility for its less fortunate, less endowed, or, in other words, less fit exponents has not yet been understood. It may be well that the successful should be prized and encouraged to perpetuate, but if those less provided with the particular qualities which lead to success are to be relegated to the worst conditions of existence, cast out from the ranks of the successful, then society becomes endangered by the criminal tendencies which these outcasts frequently develop. If extermination of the less apt, who are sometimes merely the more scrupulous and less acquisitive, is to be the principle of racial policy, then it seems surprising that charity or succor of affliction should ever be practised in the world. It should not be forgotten that the standard of fitness varies with the epoch. The capacities, physical and mental, which are sufficient to qualify an individual for success or fitness in a rude state of society, may be wholly inadequate in a complex one, and we have no knowledge that the human organism will be always capable of standing the increasing strain to which it is subjected. This constant seeking for more than human powers can furnish is undoubtedly an evil. Unless we can ensure by some process of physico-chemistry an equal distribution of mental and physical power, the deficient, having the same faculty of enjoyment as the efficient, are condemned to suffer, because the standard of efficiency has been fixed too high. Therefore the straining for fitness which often ends in incapacity or suicide must be considered an evil unless it can be proved that a portion of the race is destined to develop a power of resistance to its effects, and that this power of resistance is capable of generalization in a not too distant future.

The struggle is for superior and more and more pleasurable conditions of existence, but it should be remembered that the earth, which is the primary source of all human satisfaction, is not unlimited in its resources, and

that the day may come when these will be exhausted. In such a case the highest 'fitness' would be unavailing.

A concomitant evil is the absolute egoism on which society is based. Let there be no error as to this. It is not maintained that there is no altruism of a collective kind; but this is exercised after the struggle to possess is over and seldom or never while it is taking place. The aim is to obtain the mastery of wealth frequently by displacing others in competition, by ruining them if necessary in their calling or vocation.

What the successful struggler gives away are still the crumbs of the rich man's table, and although, in some instances, these crumbs assume considerable proportions, in the majority of cases they are of relatively small extent. These are the facts of every-day experience. Neither the moral precepts bound up in the religions, nor the doctrines of the moralists, often little known outside academies, have any but the smallest restraining influence upon this form of immorality which, though not openly taught, is tacitly accepted as inseparable not only from human nature, but from the whole of nature. It is in competition and in ruthless competition that the strong reveal themselves and the strong tend to perpetuate the strong. That is the contention. But there exists in the human mind a conception which bears the name of justice, and it is impossible to reconcile with a pure idea of justice a large number of the practices whereby the acquisitive obtain possession of a large share of advantage. Is it or is it not for the benefit of the race that such practices are common? We are told by the upholders of what may be called animalistic action that there is a higher virtue in the dominating man who follows nature's laws and proves himself the rightful owner of the amenities of life by his power of wresting them from others. Such a man becomes a model which others try to imitate, whether his success has been legitimate or not, even according to common notions of morality. In any case, whether successful legitimately or not, the dominating man is gen-

erally rich, holding in his power a superabundant share of wealth; and the question to be decided is whether it is expedient in the interest of the race that there should be such men. There can be no doubt, of course, that men possessing intellectual gifts of an order above the average are useful to conduct affairs, to be the means of furthering the sciences, and that they should be rewarded; but there is no need to raise them to the rank of demi-gods. These men, however, constitute only a section of the potential class, and their maintenance is plainly beneficial. The case is different with dominants determined to prevail by any means not absolutely banned by law, and who utilize the folly or the ignorance of others to build up their aggrandizement. It cannot be said that it is an advantage to the community at large to possess such men whose principal aim in life is to conquer wealth and to monopolize it in their families. No, their existence is an evil that is borne by the present age with a patience which, though great, at times shows signs of failing. If for legitimate, successful action there should be a reasonable reward, for successful action which is not legitimate, there should be a fitting condemnation. The tendency, however, is to exaggerate the one and to condone the other; and this is an evil of the times.

Whether over-population is harmful or beneficial is a question which involves too many considerations, economic, physiological, and social, to be considered here, but it may be said that, military necessities apart, the Latin countries where restriction of population is practised, generally exhibit far less poverty than those where unlimited paternity obtains, and it is not seen that the physical condition of the inhabitants of these countries is in any way impaired.

It is certain that the acuity of competition is increased or diminished according to the numbers of the competitors. In any case, absolutely irresponsible paternity or the callous production of offspring without reasonable prospect of support, is an evil which cannot but be harm-

ful, unless the community adopt the progeny thus introduced. Of course, if it were established that uncompromising individualism, the callousness of the lower orders of animal life, were the best and healthiest rule for human beings, then much of what is here held evil would, on the contrary, be reckoned good. But if this were conceded, we should have to admit at the same time, that all philanthropy was wrong, and that there should be no solidarity or mutual responsibility, a proposition which no one, as yet, has openly sustained, because of a conviction that such a contention would be the negation of a system to which the name of civilization is attached, a system which has proved of ascertainable advantage. There seems little reason to doubt that the interests of the race would be best served by the existence of a society so constituted that men had perfect confidence in it, a society from which all the practices that cause mental suffering and disgust of men,—jealousy, deceit, suppression of truth, mendacity, false pretence, and machiavelism generally,—were absent. Life under such conditions would be freer, calmer, happier; and yet who can say that they exist to-day?

No one who looks into his experience can contend that we have now attained to such a state of things. In no class is it reached. Jealousy, though hidden, is yet present; subterfuge, equivocation, are probably as much a part of human nature as at any time before. Cunning is still employed for the furtherance of personal designs. Men experience the old disinclination to act toward others as they would have others act toward them. As ever, the rich are arrogant, the poor depressed.

But one of the most salient facts in the morals of the times, one that is recognized by all, is the reduction to the money value of the issues of existence. When almost every action tends to be directed toward material gain, a standard is established which has the effect of focussing all aims in one direction and precluding effort from taking other paths. This certainly has the merit of call-

ing forth the acutest powers of the human intellect, but it has also the defect of circumscribing those powers, of destroying the variety which acts as hygiene to the mind, and of limiting the scope of intellectual inquiry to channels where material reward is to be found. In some countries this unification of endeavor is more observable than it is in others, but in whatever degree it manifests itself, it must, from the point of view accepted here, be held to be unfavorable. If it is harmful to occupy the mind with one fixed idea, to be constantly engrossed in the acute anxieties of gain, then this modern tendency cannot be otherwise than bad.

The example of nature is not apposite. It is true that animals in the wild state pass their lives almost exclusively in seeking and obtaining sustenance, but man claims to be superior to the animals; and in any case his complex intellect has greater needs than that of creatures lower than himself in the scale of life. But all cannot be successful in the quest for gain, and it may eventually be discovered that it is inconsistent with the best interests of society that there should be, as there are, a large number of men, not including criminals, who, unsuccessful in this quest, become malcontents without confidence in what is called human nature, indifferent to social things. And when the dominant spirit is that of gain, even the relatively successful are not free from the prevailing malady, since they have not reached the limits of attainment. The resultant of this universal impulse is to be found in cruelty, which men refrain from inflicting upon animals, but which they practice upon one another.

Yes, cruelty is an evil of our present phase,—cruelty not openly displayed, but visited upon the weak and failing by a series of indirect yet puissant agencies, among which are costly justice, high taxation, dearness of existence, inferior treatment in disease, and ostracism from successful spheres. It has been said that this mercenary phase is a passing one, and that a time will come when the evil will disappear. There seems little chance that

this result will be achieved unless it were by the inauguration of a system of equalization of wealth and education such as the world has not yet witnessed.

But there is another defect of our present state. This is the failure to recognize as evils, practices which reduce the value of existence for the majority. Such are the use of appliances for locomotion which destroy the peace of nature and render it impossible for men to satisfy the instinct for primeval natural conditions which ages of urban dwelling have been unable to destroy. For personal pleasure or for private profit it is wrong to make life ugly for the many, and sooner or later this fact must become apparent.

Yet another evil of our civilization is the failure of the directing classes to recognize the need for a more strict economy in the administration of the State, so that the burdens of taxation may be lightened; but this evil is evidently largely bound up with the questions of military defence, a defence which is apparently inevitable until the nations, not only of the West but also of the East, have lost the notion of belligerence.

But perhaps one of the greatest of all shortcomings, and one that occasionally demands the intervention of the law, is the monopolization of commodities by a class of merchants for the purpose of abnormal gain. No practice is probably more inimical to the mass of the community than this, yet it is of frequent, almost habitual occurrence, and although in some countries laws exist by which it is made criminal, these laws are seldom put in force, and the produce of the fruitful earth is made unduly hard to win.

From whatever moral standpoint this is viewed, except from the brutal one of Nietzsche, it can only be condemned as wrong. This evil, however, is equalled by another of a cognate kind. On the pretext that liberty of contract cannot be interfered with, many traps for the unwary are permitted to be set, such as organizations for speculation or for gaming, which are the causes of social

suffering. There can be no true sense of social justice as long as these snares exist; and this is an evil which must one day claim attention from legislative bodies which have it in their power to redress most social wrongs.

There are other wrong practices observable at the present time, such as child labor (in some countries), suppression of offspring in the necessitous classes, deceptive advertisement, food adulteration, and above all the unrestricted sale of alcoholic drinks. These last and those already alluded to constitute the body of evil of the present state, so far as we can judge it by the standard here adopted. Numerically the good and the bad tendencies are nearly equal, but as before remarked, numbers in a computation of this kind are of little value. It is useful, however, to place the rival tendencies in opposition to each other, so that we may attempt a mental estimate of the height attained by the one above the other, supposing that one transcends the other.

Well, if we search for a sign of advance of a general character, we shall find it in the indisputable progress in education and well-being of the nations, each considered as a whole. The records of the middle ages, the renaissance, and even of the eighteenth century, show inferior conditions in this respect. Of that there is no doubt, and it must be conceded that this factor in itself appears sufficient to cause the good to exceed the evil. We must remember, however, that general progress is accompanied by an intensive activity which may or may not prove too great a strain, and that the farther we move away from natural conditions, the more liable we are to be exposed to the accidents peculiar to artificial ones.

The importance of this factor may, however, be held to be sufficient to cause the good influences of the times to exceed the evil. The race has its fate in its own hands. If it allows the destructive habits of thought to gain the ascendancy, then it sinks below a standard which, by the opposite habits, may be raised. With greater general contentment and more efficient education many of the

shoals which are now visible may disappear. Science, though capable of being enlisted in the cause of evil, is generally on the side of racial good; and it may be relied upon to effect more and more beneficial changes in the human lot.

At the same time we must not be too sanguine. Retrogressions, even from our present imperfect moral and social states, may at any time occur owing to the temporary predominance of any adverse factor, and it cannot be too much insisted upon that any mixture of the white and colored races might cause great perturbations.

Finally, the moral position appears to be as follows: The good, taken as a whole, exceeds the evil by reason of the factors above alluded to, but not in the degree which might have been expected after four thousand years of western civilization; and there are elements on the side of evil which, if they increased in value, might easily destroy the good attained. Of course, if it were proved that evil is necessary to the production of good, that men should prey upon each other and to a certain extent annihilate each other, then our mode of viewing all the causes of human suffering due to the particular conduct which produces them would have to undergo a change. The moral problem would consist in adjusting, as finely as possible, the evil to the good. But then it would be difficult to continue to apply the name of evil to what would be eventual good, and we should be compelled to adopt an 'all-for-the-best' attitude of mind which could not escape the obligation of holding as salutary, and therefore as legitimate, a certain amount of what we now call crime.

Just as we are apparently better without the devastating scourges of the middle ages, so should we seemingly be better without wars and ruthless competition. The stimulation said to be afforded by these two last features would doubtless be found, ultimately, to be derivable from other sources of invigoration. There is at least a high probability that the aim should be the continual reduc-

tion of the causes of apparent racial harm, the removal of the hindrances to a more perfect social state.

If the race desire this state it can hardly fail to obtain it, and if it does not desire it, then there probably exists some undiscovered reason why it does not. In any case if the race is to preserve the zest to live, it cannot but be well that it should have confidence in its perfectibility.

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